

**Reverend James A. Aloupis (micro)**

Q: Wonderful to be here. And you have regards from the people there. (inaudible)

A: The gunshots, there were gunshots. I mean I saw the guns. Maybe I was foolish, I did it, so I'm foolish. On a Sunday, the height of the riots, they're having the biggest parade you can imagine. Waves and waves of people, marching on Hyde Street all the way down. Sunday the word got around. My parish counsel, Father (inaudible), I said OK. I said to myself, all these years I've been talking because I believe the word of God. I said, is it worth anything? So what I did, maybe foolish. Everybody left, you've never been a quicker fixing up. Now, I'm here. Now I won't say I'm alone... I put on my (inaudible), I open all the doors, Kiki knows this, all the windows, everything wide open. And what do I do foolishly? I'm the one man with viewing stand, I'm outside now, in front of St. Nicholas. The parade starts, I've never seen so many people. And then they've got two official cars with policemen in the middle, they're coming and then I see the two cars and the police stop in front of St. Nicholas. They stop, so there I am, smiling nice. I hear through the megaphone, "Good Father, offer your prayer. We need it." So they brought the megaphone to

me, God help me! I offered a prayer, right. People are coming and then they decide to come into the church like I told you, like Radio City, the Christmas Show, the Easter show. Lines, but very orderly, very orderly. They came in, they went around inside the church not touching anything, not breaking not even a window. It's the truth. Endless, endless. When they finally finished, two men came up to me, they didn't tell me who they were but they said, "Father, we want your reaction right now, how do you feel?" So I looked at them, I smiled, you know, now what prompted me to say this? I said, you know, I feel like Nathan Hail (sp?). I have one (inaudible). That's if I had known that we would've been honored and we would have been privileged to have these people in church, I would have had my ladies make greek pastries.

(laughter)

A: And they look at me and one says to the other, "You know, he really means it."

(laughter)

A: I said, of course I mean it. What an honor to have all these people come in and not to have this Greek hospitality. They never told me but the next day, Kiki remembers, there were reporters from the New York Times. And would you

believe on the front page? Greek priest laments no coffee for the people.

Q: You kept that article, Father?

A: No.

Q: It's the New York Times, we could get that.

A: Only to say, we're talking family. Maybe someone can say, Father you were foolish. Maybe someone with a gun. You know, you never know.

Q: You never know.

A: And I asked him, someone told me to do that. And I wanted to know, is it worth it or am I fooling myself? But I want to tell you, they didn't touch anything, they didn't take anything --

Q: That's beautiful.

A: -- they didn't break anything. But we had so many people coming inside.

Q: That was a very good anecdote.

A: That was another one. I love that moment.

Q: That was a very good moment. Father, knowing you were (inaudible) understand and it is something that you really don't understand too well when something inside of you tells you to do something and you do it and it comes out well.

Because that insight was not from your own doing, it was from the Lord himself. It was from a higher being. And you do it, and you feel good about it, and it kind of works out. And all the odds are against you when you're doing it. And yet it does work out. And this happened to me also, in my short time as a priest.

Q1: It's happened to me, I'm not a priest. I think it happens to a lot of people. I think it happens to everyone who believes.

Q2: Do we have any more questions?

Q: Father, I'd like to first thank you and first of all to take this and even take it further. Why don't you just jot it down and give it to one of us and we'll add it to it. And if there's any articles or clippings, we'll making photocopies and give it back to you. Like you said, this article that was in New York Times, I mean we can always call the newspaper and get it. But if you have it at least we have the date and we can call them up and say we'd like to have a copy of that article. So, I'm sure you have a lot of articles.

Q2: Any recommendations, letters, you know, if you could give us copies. Because you've done so many things. How were you involved with the Boys and Girls Club?

A: Oh through Dave Juan (sp?), Dave Juan was the founder of the Boys Clubs. And in the beginning, Peter might remember this, with Mike. At first he would invite all the young people into his house. He had a beautiful home in Weekwake (sp?). And slowly, slowly the idea came across that we should have... These are not boy scouts. These are the Boys Clubs and the Girls clubs. So thanks to Dave Juan, and I became very close to Dave through Mike.

Q1: And Mike was (inaudible).

A: And with David Juan. We're going back now. We would have meetings about the Boys Clubs, the Girls Clubs and at that time, it's a small world. Sharp James (sp?) was the youngest member of the municipal committee. He was the youngest member and he would help Dave, they were very close. He liked the Boys Clubs. And in time, this began to grow to mature in a very good way. And on one occasion they were to honor David Buono (sp?) in the new section with a plate (inaudible) named in his honor. And Sharp and I were invited. I was going to have the opening prayer and Sharp was representing the city of Newark. So we went, there was a picture taken, Sharp and I in the [stall ledger?], way back. So I've gotten to know our mayor years ago when he was a very, very young man. And if one helps the other --

Q: There's a footnote, he's a graduate of Central.

Q1: No (inaudible), and a classmate of Martina and Tenoctitly.

Q2: Do you have a question?

Q1: No, just if Father can give us all these wonderful articles and also these citations that you have and awards, we'll make copies, we'll give them back to you because it's history. It's something that we should definitely have in this book.

Q: Father, we want to share this with others ok? Father, thank you very much on behalf of all of us. Eloijah and God Bless. And there are three words that really describe you, Axios, Axios, Axios.

A: No, I'm very fortunate to have all of you.

Q1: You're unique, Father.

A: I'm the lucky one.

Q1: You are unique.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q1: We're very fortunate.

A: Kaladis (sp?) Had written a nice articles too...

Q2: Oh really? OK.

A: And Michael has the first one.

Q2: I have that one, this is Michael's.

Q: We have, Gus Dealers (sp?) gave me a lot.

A: Jerry had a nice one.

**END OF SIDE 1**

Q: To St. Nicholas, father Basilino, Cordoleon, Papa Nikolakis, Kostakos, etc. Please tell us a little bit about those clergymen.

A: Describing the clergymen?

Q: Yes.

A: What type of description?

Q: In other words, their personalities and you know, your relationship with them.

A: OK, well again I am happy to tell you that I happen to be a believer of being a good neighbor. And that has been very helpful in my priesthood. Without looking far, our immediate neighborhood. We are family, right across the street. When we were gifted with a parking lot, I went around the neighborhood, I didn't miss anybody. And I would tell them with a smile, "Our parking lot is our parking lot. Whenever you need it, don't even call. If there's anything going on, a big service, let us know the night before or the day before so we'll have everything ready." They come the

students, no payment as you know. No payment. We tell them, please respect the ground. This has turned out to be one of our biggest lessons. So, being a good neighbor and being more than a good neighbor with other Greek churches, our neighbors. Now if I were to tell you something, it's not a critical evaluation and I don't want you to take it as such. Just take it as an event. 1954, a little after September 19<sup>th</sup>, our first Parish Council meeting. I've been debating if I should say this, I think I will. I know with whom I'm talking. But take it only as an event, nothing more, all right? Our first Parish Council meeting, I'm excited, I'm happy, I'm delighted, everything. And now I hear people telling me, my Parish Council, Father, "We are at St. Nicholas, you have nothing to do with St. Demetrius." I'm listening, and at first I thought they were just teasing me. No, they were quite serious. And this and that. So when they finished I looked at them with all my love, then I said something that I don't know if I should've said, I said, "Is this the (inaudible) that you call it, your wonderful parish, [GREEK]." And then I added, " I thought, [GREEK]." I tried to make a little distinction between [GREEK] and [GREEK], no, they looked at me. I guess they didn't expect me to say anything or just to say, "Oh yes." And then I added, "If you really believe that I'm not for



St. Nicholas, I've been (inaudible) all my life. Don't tell me to do this or not to do that. I'm not a rebel, but I believe in being a good neighbor." And then I added, [GREEK]. So, we started. We continued here. We would take them downtown to the Old First Church, we would take them to all the churches, Second Presbyterian, all of them, Petty Memorial, Trinity Cathedral, right. And this came easy because this is what I had done all my life, with my parishes. Very involved. Would you believe that about a year later, the same members of the Parish Council [GREEK], with the relationships with Father Cordoleone, all right? Not to make it impressive, 30 years together, we never had one misunderstanding. And you're talking about two Greek Orthodox Churches where then very frequently, I would walk from here to St. Dimitrius, eight minutes flag. Not running, walking. We were so close, we never had a misunderstanding. Now, maybe this is hard to believe. He knows it is the truth.

Q2: Knowing you...

A: No, we didn't have time for [GREEK]. We had things to do.

Q: And he was a great person, Father Cordoleone.

A: And I'm thankful that even until today, we're still running around. Maybe smaller now, but we're running around.

Q2: I remember, who was your rabbi friend and we did dances?

A: You remember Rabbi Soltes?

Q2: I do remember Rabbi Soltes, that's right.

A: You remember? Beautiful.

Q2: Yes, exchanges between the two communities.

A: Not even only that but even going to Israel. Even where he introduced us to the mayor of Jerusalem. 28 years, Jedi Koleg (sp?). Whenever we would Koleg would throw a big reception for Rabbi Soltes and (inaudible). We're very thankful. I'm so grateful, so thankful.

Q2: And also, you remember Mayor Dunn? You were very good friends with him too, of Elizabeth. Mayor Dunn of Elizabeth.

A: Oh yes, yes. You remember Mayor Dunn.

Q: I remember we met him for the Junior Olympics that time. Refresh your memory? It used to be held in (inaudible) and I was one of the co-chairman of the Olympics and we had a final location. And I gave you a call Father, and I said, "Father, can you help us out?" And you said, "What, Peter?" And I said, "We would like to get this to Elizabeth." And you said, "Well I know someone there. And then we met with Mayor Dunn, I remember that day with Gus, with Seth.

A: You know, on that tangent, we're talking family. We arrived at St. Nicholas not that I was going to play politics. I have never played politics. I go as Father Aloupis, you're a Democrat, I'm happy for you. You're a Republican, I'm happy for you. I'm Father Aloupis. Now, too many days did not go by, now you wouldn't remember, maybe. Mayor Leo Carlin the mayor of Newark, Leo Carlin. I called up from here speaking to his secretary. I will be honored, I'm the new (inaudible) and I'm anxious to meet our mayor. And she said, "Father, you sound very happy and determined." I said, "I am," I said, "I want to meet him." We made an appointment, I went. Now they were waiting to see an entourage of others coming with me. And I detected that, I said, "No, I'm all alone." It was nice. Mayor Leo Carlin, he also think I have people coming. I said, "I'm all alone." Surprised, we sat down. I told him where I came from, the new kid around the block. (pause) And I told him as we sat down with Mayor Carlin, where I'm serving, where I came from, my relationships with other neighbors from my previous parishes, my concern, and I told him I'm here because I'm very concerned about our city, our County, our safety, our state. Now, he's looking at me. I said, "I'm very concerned, that's why I'm here." And I said, "If at any time the local probation office might have a little

whatever with any of our Greek children, I said, would you please notify them before anything is done. Call Father Aloupis at St. Nicholas. At least, he was very nice, I have to say. Everything beautiful. When I got up to leave, he got up, he praised me respectfully. And he said something like this, "If I had more clergy like your feeling, we wouldn't have many problems." And I said, "Mayor, this is the way I feel and I didn't want to come with anybody else. I wanted you to see me and I wanted to see you." Would you believe we found an unbelievable friendship? I didn't go demanding, I requested, OK. That was why. Then we had the county executive, like we had Jim, OK, and the same thing. Appointment, my concern for the community, all right. Now, we come to Crampton. Now if you remember Robert Minor, governor of New Jersey, OK. My appointment, following through the same thing. They were all so surprised, and to even tell me, "We'd never had an appointment like this before." I said, "I'm just concerned, and I want you to know it and I'm ready to help. Wherever, whatever." Would you believe that with Robert Minor, this was the end of 1954, that following January was the inauguration. Before the inauguration, I got another beautiful letter. A personal letter, from Governor. Please come for one of the inaugural prayers. I was honored, I was delighted. All

right. Not playing politics. The Greek Orthodox Church, and since then to make it Greek. In Governor Mike (sp?), every governor, including with (inaudible). The interface surface at the Basilica, (inaudible) he invited us. Because when you're concerned, and you go not demanding, people appreciate it. And even here, this is a reflection of our concerns. We did something and we were helpful for the university, not that I did it, but we helped. We even had gone to Washington to Congressional hearings.

Q2: Father, we don't know these things about you.

A: No.

Q: That's good, it's good.

Q2: Father, we have to know these things. What else were you involved with, in the overall community?

A: Interface work, collective with that.

Q2: Weren't you involved with the Boys and Girls Clubs of north too?

Q: With David Buono and Mike, I cant remember his name.

A: Michael, who was the --

Q2: Cartis!

Q: Mike Cartis!

A: And David Buono.

Q2: Father, we have to know this.

Q: Father, how about telling us the story when the Pope came here and when you first met this Pope?

A: But I'm taking up your time.

Q: No, please! That's why we're here.

A: Well this was one of the highlights all right. My hospital visitations, almost anywhere everywhere. One day I'm visiting Passaic, the hospitals. I had finished with Passaic General and I said, "I have a few minutes, let me go to St. Mary's Hospital Passaic." I go, there, Father remembers, the director, she reminded me of Mother Theresa. This is Mother Immaculata, Immaculata. She had taken a liking to me.

Q2: (laughter) Why?

A: So, I go in now in the information area. She spots me way down in the corridor and she starts running. Now I thought something was wrong. She takes me by the hand, like you see in the [fiumi di?] episodes. Now she's telling me, "We have a distinguished visitor and I want you to meet him." I said, "I would be honored, I would be pleased." And as we were going, I see a very dignified person and he's dressed like a Cardinal. I recognized it, I went up to him. Really unusual face. He looked at me, I smiled looking at him

right in the eyes smiling. He asks in Polish "Mother Immaculata, is he one of ours?" I picked it up. (laughter) And before she answered, I said, he's not asking me, but I said, "Oh yes, Afina goris." When I said "afina goris," do you know who was then talking to me? He was the Cardinal of Europe, who was now called the Pope. And then I saw him again more recently at the Basilica when the Archbishop Diakovos (sp?) was at the airport to meet the Pope coming with Alitalia. Well I had been invited into faith to be at the Basilica. So I went.

Q2: Did that surprise Diakovos?

A: Very close. There we were. And I'm telling the high Monsignors on my left...

Q: Wasn't it the monsignors that took you among them? The monsignors took you, right? Is that correct?

A: I'm looking at the man in front of us, and I tell the Monsignor, the High Monsignor, I said, "You know, he reminds be of Bob Hope." Well, it was Bob Hope.

(laughter)

Q2: That's right, I remember the story.

A: They came from California for the Pope. Now, when we finished I thought we were going to leave. And then I got a little message that said please stay for a little reception,

you are invited. I don't know how but I was invited. Now there's the line, Mrs. Hope, Bob's wife.

(interruption)

A: All righty, just to say this. The reception, we went over, you know, and usually the Monsignors and all so uptight. Well I took my time, I came to Bob Hope. Now you know, they're all waiting in line, and I said, "Bob, I said, I thought that the fountain of youth was in Florida, it's in California!" He hugs me, "Boy I'm taking you with me."

(laughter)

A: Now, we come up to the Pope. He sees a million people a week.

Q: Right.

A: I mentioned the incident. How he came to visit relatives who were sick at St. Mary's and I had the honor of meeting him. Now listen to this. Diplomacy. Oh yes, I remember. And I thought of that movie with Marie Shevagli (sp?). Oh I remember, you know that! (laughter) Anyway, we're thankful for all these things, very grateful.

(multiple conversations)

Q: Hold on one second. I just want to thank Chris. You know that's were (inaudible).



(break in tape)

Q: OK, Father (inaudible). Now, we're going to pull up the next three questions together because they're really intertwined. And I want to ask you in your recollection and humorous things. Because let's face it, (inaudible) is going to be. You know, we want to keep it kind of on a humanistic plane. So the next three questions are kind of in that way. Who were the most colorful people in our community time when you came and what can you recall about them? And the second is, what are some of the anecdotes that you can recall to depict the life in a Greek town in North Granby in the initial time of your arrival, as you witnessed it. And tell us what you can recollect throughout your 45 years of St. Nicholas' most humanistic way to show the life of the community as it was lived at the beginning of your priesthood here to the present time.

Q1: That's a lot.

Q2: (laughter)

Q: But, really they are all intertwined.

A: Who were the most colorful people? Well I think that the members of our Parish Council were a special group. I can think of the late Michael Pappus and then we had Tom Argurus who married father's daughter and I remember the

Mascolarisis. Adam Adams had passed on before I came so I really never had the honor of meeting and working with him, all right. And what I can recall about them, I think it comes in a special praise, motivation. I think that in their way, they all had one motive, the good of St. Nicholas. And that I find most commendable, when one has this type of a motive, a motivation to be helpful, to improve, to make it more special all right. Now, anecdotes, the Greek town, the initial time. Well my initial time, I think that slowly there was an exodus to the suburbs, the rise of suburbia. And again, I find this very, very commendable that our families were trying to improve and to leave one area that was very good to them and to go to another and get in time, this presents problems because as one gets a little older it's more convenient to go here rather than to go further away. The (inaudible) of convenience. And we had to be realistic, that this place, its role. One, the other. When we came here in 1954, in New Jersey, we had 12 parishes including St. Nicholas. Now, we're more than double.

Q: We're close to 30. In New Jersey, there's 30 around here?

Q2: Right.

A: The exodus, whatever. And with Gus the other day we sat down and took a little ratio and a little circle. And would you believe in about half an hour, give or take, you can almost to 11 Greek Orthodox churches. In the Midwest, there's one Greek church for miles and miles. Here, within half an hour.

(multiple conversations; inaudible)

A: And I think that in time, this also has led to this.

Q2: It definitely has led to more.

Q: And as one, I just want to add Father, that, you know, baptized in St. Nicholas, married in St. Nicholas and my children are baptized. St. Nicholas is the mother church and what we said this is to -- disciple of St. Nicholas are the ones who go out to other churches and become very active. Parish members and Council members, and (inaudible) members and -- it all started with St. Nicholas, the mother church. And you should be commended and Father Spigadokis (sp?) should be commended. And Father Aloupis, you know, your disciples are out there. They're all out there.

Q2: We'd like to take a look at some of these and maybe write down.

A: Coming to the last one. I think that would, describes, the first, the beginning and the continuity. This is what we've

had. Today for example, the couple that was here leaving for Greece tonight. I had never seen the young lady until today. Peter (inaudible) I knew. In fact I met him when he was one half day old in the maternity. But the young lady, today. But we tried to show respect, love, this and that. Before they left, she came to tell me, "I've never felt more loved in a church as I did today." I said, I thanked her for that. I appreciated that. We took her inside in the church, we gave them two candles, they lit. We had a prayer. I told them to keep the candles, in times of whatever in their personal life. Anniversary, feast days, whatever, whatever. Light it, have your little prayer, put it out until the next time. I gave them by (inaudible). We do a lot of this. To tell the way she felt, and naturally, it pleased us.

Q2: Father --

A: Instead of leaving with other negative thoughts. Yes, dear.

Q2: I'd like you to tell the story of the day of the riots in Newark when you were down here. I want you to tell that story.

A: You want to hear it again?

Q: Well, I've never heard it so I want to hear it.

A: All right, I'll tell you, but I'm concerned about your schedule.

Q: Don't worry about our schedule, we have time.

A: Now, we're going back to the Dark Ages. And during the dark ages, Father will tell you. My colleagues were calling me Jungle Jim of our neighborhood. So I'm Jungle Jim. I would take it with a smile. When you show someone --

**End - Reverend James A. Aloupis (micro)**